

2001 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Risk Behaviors of Montana Youth

Smokers vs. Nonsmokers

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Prepared for

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Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is administered by the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) every two years to 7th and 8th grade students and to high schools students. The purpose of the survey is to help monitor the prevalence of behaviors that not only influence youth health, but also put youth at risk for the most significant health and social problems that can occur during adolescence. While all schools in Montana can participate in the survey on a volunteer basis, approximately 54 high schools are randomly selected to be included with high schools from other states for national data and reports.

The 2001 YRBS was conducted in March of 2001 with 7,655 7th and 8th grade students and 9,157 high school students. This represents approximately 31 percent of all 7th and 8th grade students and 18 percent of all high school students in Montana. Schools administering the survey to students were provided with detailed written instructions on conducting a random survey in their schools. To encourage accurate responses to sensitive questions, a strict protocol was implemented to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participating students.

In 1997, an estimated 22 percent of adult Montanans reported being current smokers and most had started smoking in their teen-age years (Montana Department of Health and Human Services, 1997). The national death rate is about twice as high for heavy smokers between the ages of 25 and 65 than it is for nonsmokers. In Montana, tobacco-related deaths account for one-fifth of all deaths and there are more tobacco-related deaths than combined deaths from traffic accidents, alcohol and drug usage, homicides, suicides, and AIDS. Each year Montanans pay approximately \$250 million for health-care needed due to the use of tobacco products (Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, 1995).

Survey Validity and Limitations

Data used in this report from the 2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey are not based on a random survey. It would not be valid to generalize the findings from this survey to all 7th and 8th grade and high school students in Montana. It is only valid to attribute the results of this survey to the students who reported their behaviors in response to the items in the questionnaire. In addition, respondents in self-reported surveys may have a tendency to underreport behaviors that are socially undesirable, unhealthy, or illegal (alcohol consumption, drug use, seat belt non-usage, etc.) and overreport behaviors that are socially desirable (amount of exercise, etc.).

Montana Youth Who Smoke

In Montana during 2001, an estimated 16 percent of 7th and 8th grade students and 29 percent of high school students had tried smoking a cigarette in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. More

alarming is the fact that three percent of 7th and 8th grade youth and 11 percent of all high school youth had smoked on all 30 days prior to taking the survey. Furthermore, the 2001 data indicates that there may be differences in smoking among youth depending on racial classification. Montana youth who identify themselves as nonwhite tend to include a higher percentage of smokers than those who identify themselves as white. Approximately 28 percent of nonwhite 7th and 8th grade students reported smoking in the 30 days prior to taking the survey while 13 percent of white students reported smoking in the same time period. A similar situation exists at the high school level. Forty-eight percent of nonwhite high school students reported smoking in the 30 days prior to taking the survey compared to 29 percent of the white students.

Are Montana youth who smoke more apt to engage in other high-risk behaviors than nonsmokers? For example, are youth who smoke more likely to also use alcohol, use marijuana or inhalants, fight with other students, use chewing tobacco, or be sexually active? These questions were investigated using a cross-tabulation of the 2001 Montana YRBS data. The results of this investigation are reported in the following section of this report.

Survey Results

For the purposes of the report, youth that are classified as smokers are those Montana youth in 2001 that reported smoking on at least one day of the 30 days prior to taking the YRBS. The risk behaviors that were investigated are listed in Figure 1 for 7th and 8th grade students and in Figure 3 for high school youth.

Results of the investigation indicate the following:

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to have used/abused alcohol than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are three times more likely (74 percent vs. 22 percent) than nonsmokers to have had at least one drink of alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are over twice as likely (86 percent vs. 42 percent) to have had a drink of alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are seven times more likely (25 percent vs. 3 percent) than nonsmokers to have driven a car after drinking alcohol in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Montana high school youth who smoke are over three times more likely (45 percent vs. 13 percent) to have driven a car after drinking alcohol than nonsmokers.

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are over five times more likely (59 percent vs. 10 percent) than nonsmokers to have been involved in binge drinking (five or more drinks of alcohol in a row) in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Montana high school youth who smoke are nearly three times more likely (75 percent vs. 28 percent) to have been involved in binge drinking.

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to have used chewing tobacco than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are eight times more likely (28 percent vs. 4 percent) than nonsmokers to have used chewing tobacco in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are over three times more likely (32 percent vs. 10 percent) to have used chewing tobacco in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to have used marijuana than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are 10 times more likely (53 percent vs. 5 percent) than nonsmokers to have used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are five times more likely (54 percent vs. 11 percent) to have used marijuana in the 30 days prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to have, in their lifetimes, sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are over three times more likely (41 percent vs. 11 percent) than nonsmokers to have sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high in their lifetimes. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are over three times more likely (28 percent vs. 9 percent) to have sniffed glue or used inhalants in their lifetimes to get high.

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to be sexually active than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are about four times more likely (35 percent vs. 8 percent) than nonsmokers to have had sexual intercourse during the three months prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are over two times more likely (51 percent vs. 20 percent) to have had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to have been in at least one fight in the 12 months prior to taking the survey than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are more likely (66 percent vs. 36 percent) than nonsmokers to have been in a fight in the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are nearly twice as likely (47 percent vs. 24 percent) to have been in a fight in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

- **Montana youth who smoke are more likely to have seriously considered suicide than youth who do not smoke.**

Montana 7th and 8th graders who smoke are over three times more likely (40 percent vs. 13 percent) than nonsmokers to have seriously considered suicide during the 12 months prior to taking the survey. Similarly, Montana high school youth who smoke are twice as likely (30 percent vs. 14 percent) to have seriously considered suicide in the 12 months prior to taking the survey.

Clearly, Montana youth who smoke also place themselves at higher risk for negative health consequences from other undesirable behaviors than youth who do not smoke. This association exists in every behavior risk category, including exercise and diet.

Figure 1
2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Smokers vs. Nonsmokers
Montana 7th and 8th Grade Students

Health Risk Behavior	Smokers	Nonsmokers	Statewide Average
Had at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (Q52)	74.0%	21.9%	30.2%
Drove a car when drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (Q13)	24.9%	3.3%	6.8%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 days (Q53)	58.8%	10.1%	17.9%
Smoked on one or more days during the past 30 days (Q34)	27.6%	3.5%	7.4%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days (Q43)	52.9%	4.8%	12.5%
Used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days (Q57)	41.2%	10.6%	15.4%
Sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high during their life (Q61)	34.9%	7.9%	9.7%
Had sexual intercourse during the past three months (Q71)	65.7%	35.5%	40.3%
Had been in at least one fight during the past 12 months (Q20)	39.7%	12.5%	16.8%
Seriously considered suicide during the past 12 months (Q26)	52.1%	56.2%	55.5%
Tend to think of themselves as about the right weight (Q76)	64.2%	75.3%	73.4%

Figure 2
2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Smokers vs. Nonsmokers
Montana 7th and 8th Grade Students

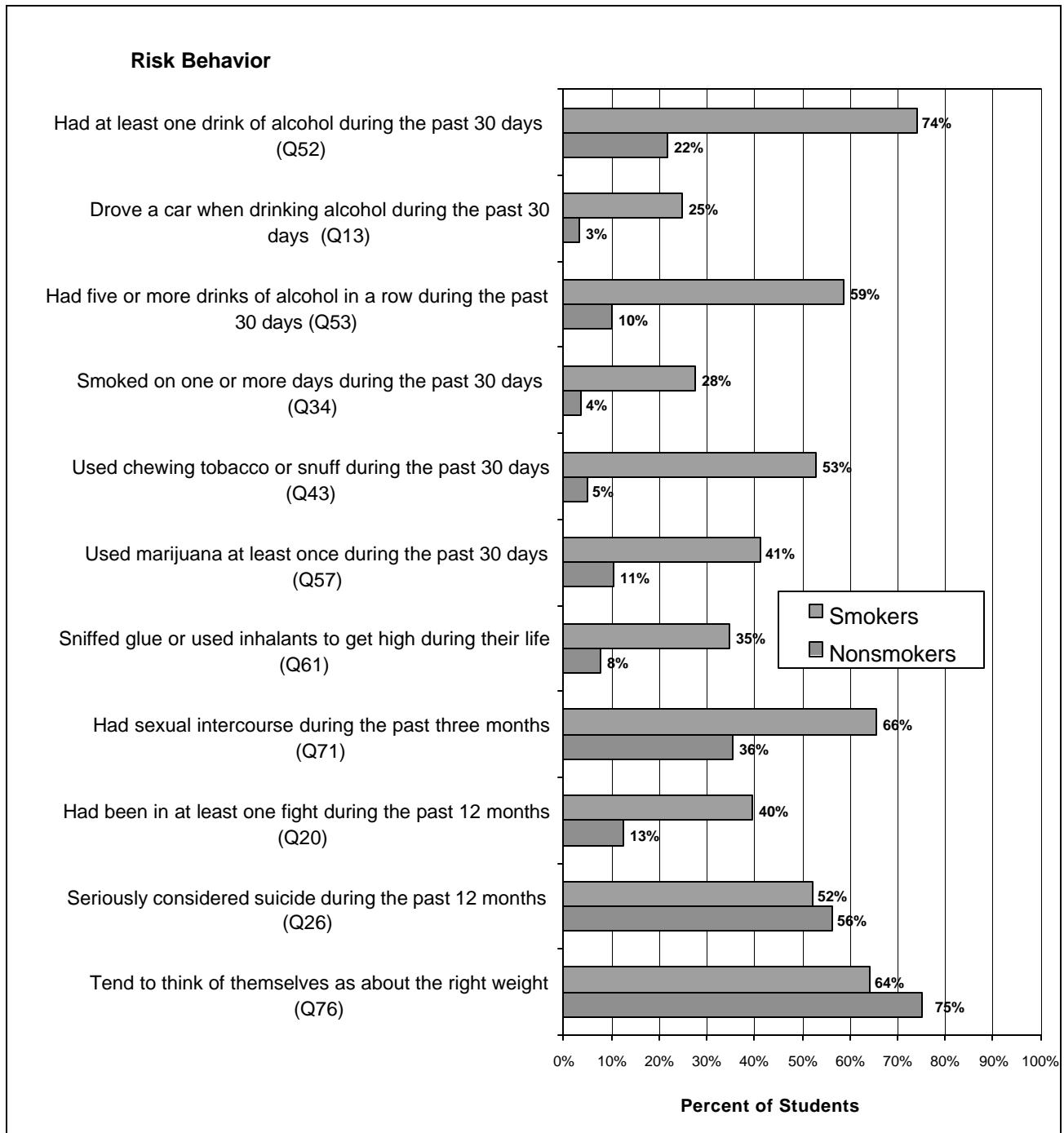


Figure 3
2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Smokers vs. Nonsmokers
Montana High School Students

Health Risk Behavior	Smokers	Nonsmokers	Statewide Average
Had at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days (Q52)	85.9%	41.7%	54.1%
Drove a car when drinking alcohol during the past 30 days (Q13)	44.8%	13.3%	21.8%
Had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row during the past 30 days (Q53)	75.1%	27.9%	41.4%
Smoked on one or more days during the past 30 days (Q34)	31.7%	9.5%	15.7%
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days (Q43)	53.9%	11.0%	27.1%
Used marijuana at least once during the past 30 days (Q57)	28.4%	9.3%	15.0%
Sniffed glue or used inhalants to get high during their life (Q61)	51.1%	19.7%	30.7%
Had sexual intercourse during the past three months (Q71)	46.8%	24.3%	31.6%
Had been in at least one fight during the past 12 months (Q20)	29.9%	13.7%	19.4%
Seriously considered suicide during the past 12 months (Q26)	51.2%	55.7%	54.3%
Tend to think of themselves as about the right weight (Q76)	61.2%	72.8%	67.6%

Figure 4
2001 Youth Risk Behavior Survey
Risk Behaviors of Smokers vs. Nonsmokers
Montana High School Students

